

Central of Georgia Railway:
Passenger Station & Trainshed
Corner of Louisville (Railroad Avenue)
Road and West Broad Street
Savannah
Chatham County
Georgia

HAER No. GA-2

HAER
GA,
26-SAV,
56 -

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
US Department of the Interior
Washington, DC 20240

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

HAER
GA,
26-244,
56-

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Central of Georgia Railroad: Passenger Station & Trainshed

AND/OR COMMON

Central of Georgia Depot

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

West Broad Street at Liberty

CITY, TOWN

Savannah

10 VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Georgia

CODE

COUNTY

Chatham

CODE

051

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

__DISTRICT

☒ PUBLIC

☒ OCCUPIED

__AGRICULTURE

__MUSEUM

☒ BUILDING(S)

__PRIVATE

__UNOCCUPIED

☒ COMMERCIAL

__PARK

__STRUCTURE

__BOTH

__WORK IN PROGRESS

__EDUCATIONAL

__PRIVATE RESIDENCE

__SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

__ENTERTAINMENT

__RELIGIOUS

__OBJECT

__IN PROCESS

☒ YES: RESTRICTED

__GOVERNMENT

__SCIENTIFIC

__BEING CONSIDERED

__YES: UNRESTRICTED

__INDUSTRIAL

__TRANSPORTATION

__NO

__MILITARY

__OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

City of Savannah

STREET & NUMBER

City Hall

CITY, TOWN

Savannah

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

Georgia

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Chatham County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Savannah

STATE

Georgia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historic American Engineering Record; Historic Savannah

DATE

July 1975; July, August 1962 ☒ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☒ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress; Historic Savannah Foundation

CITY, TOWN

Washington, DC;

Savannah, GA

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONOITION

☐ EXCELLENT
☒ GOOD
☐ FAIR
☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED
☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The headhouse of the Central of Georgia Passenger Depot in Savannah is a two-story, nine-bay, gable-roofed brick building. The facade includes a central five-bay pedimented pavillon with each bay set off by pilasters from ground to cornice. Each bay is pierced by a semicircular arched opening on both first and second levels. On the first floor, these openings contain double-door entrances in bays three and seven and double-hung, rectangular sash windows in the other bays. All first floor bays contain solid wooden semicircular transomes. Second floor openings contain double-hung arched sash windows. All windows are six over six lights.

Each side contains four windows on each floor identical to those in the facade. The side elevation is bisected by a central pilaster and set off by corner pilasters. A cornice frieze surrounding the building is composed of alternating panels of grilled and tryglyphic patterns.

The first floor focuses around a central waiting room and a ticket office flanked on either side by what were probably separate facilities for black and white passengers. A one-story brick addition projecting from the rear of the main block at the southern end was used as a mail room. A similar two-story frame addition projects from the northern end into the trainshed.

The trainshed at the rear of the building is the earliest remaining example of tricomposite truss construction. The roof is carried on a series of 26 trusses set 15 feet 2 inches apart and measures 381 feet 5 inches in length. Each truss is composed of a top chord of 2 parallel wooden timbers (15 x 4-1/2 inches), wrought iron, cambered lower chord. Perhaps the most interesting detail of the truss is the radial connection between the cruciform cast-iron strut and the horizontal tension rods of the lower chord. This is composed of two slightly oval spoked disks bolted through a central axis and securing between them an iron rim with holes to receive the various members. The truss span is 70 feet and rests on brick sidewalls which are pierced with arched doorways at each bay. Cast iron brackets support a 5 foot overhang on either side.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
PREHISTORIC	__ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__ COMMUNITY PLANNING	__ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__ RELIGION
1400-1499	__ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__ CONSERVATION	__ LAW	__ SCIENCE
1500-1599	__ AGRICULTURE	__ ECONOMICS	__ LITERATURE	__ SCULPTURE
1600-1699	X ARCHITECTURE	__ EDUCATION	__ MILITARY	__ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1700-1799	__ ART	X ENGINEERING	__ MUSIC	__ THEATER
X 1800-1899	X COMMERCE	__ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__ PHILOSOPHY	X TRANSPORTATION
1900	__ COMMUNICATIONS	__ INDUSTRY	__ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__ OTHER (SPECIFY)
		__ INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1860-1876

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Augustus Schwaab

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Central of Georgia Railroad was organized in 1833 and by 1850 had outgrown its original facilities in Savannah. Trackage increased from 190 miles in 1843 to 527 miles by 1855. To meet these demands, William M. Wadley, then Superintendent, conceived a plan for a comprehensive, integrated complex, including passenger and freight depots and shops for the construction and repair of locomotives and rolling stock. When completed in 1855, the Central's facility was described in Zerah Colburn's New York Railroad Advocate as "the most complete and elegant railroad station in the country."

The construction of the passenger depot building is an illustration of the impact of the events of April 1861 on the industry of the South. Begun in 1860, the completion of the head house was interrupted by the Civil War. It stood unfinished for over fifteen years, gradually decaying until 1874 when the railroad was finally able to resume construction on the station. By that time, much of the timber framing had deteriorated and had to be replaced. It was finally opened in 1876.

The Central of Georgia Trainshed was completed in 1861 as the last major feature of the depot complex. Its designer was Augustus Schwaab, a German immigrant who was an engineer with the company and later became one of the city's most prominent builders. Schwaab's foreign training probably accounts for the unusual configuration of the building's roof trusses. The radial connection between the cast iron compression member and the wrought iron lower chord is unlike others used in America and is more characteristic of French and German practices. These tricomposite trusses of wood, wrought iron and cast iron are rare documents of the early use of structural ironwork.

The Central of Georgia Terminal and Trainshed at Savannah are part of one of the earliest attempts to build a comprehensive railroad terminal and shop complex in this country. The structure of the trainshed is the oldest remaining example of early iron roof construction, the first step in the evolution of modern steel frame building methods.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Central of Georgia RR:
Passenger Station & Train Shed
HAER No. GA-2
(Page 4)

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

Dixon, Jefferson M., The Central Railroad of Georgia: 1833-92; unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, Dept. of History, Graduate School of Education, Geo. Peabody College for Teachers, 1953.

"Georgia Central Railroad Station of Savannah", from Colburn's New York Railroad Advocate, Savannah Daily Morning News, July 17, 1855.



Central of Georgia Depot, Savannah, Georgia
West Broad Street at Liberty

Photo: Eric DeLony
1973

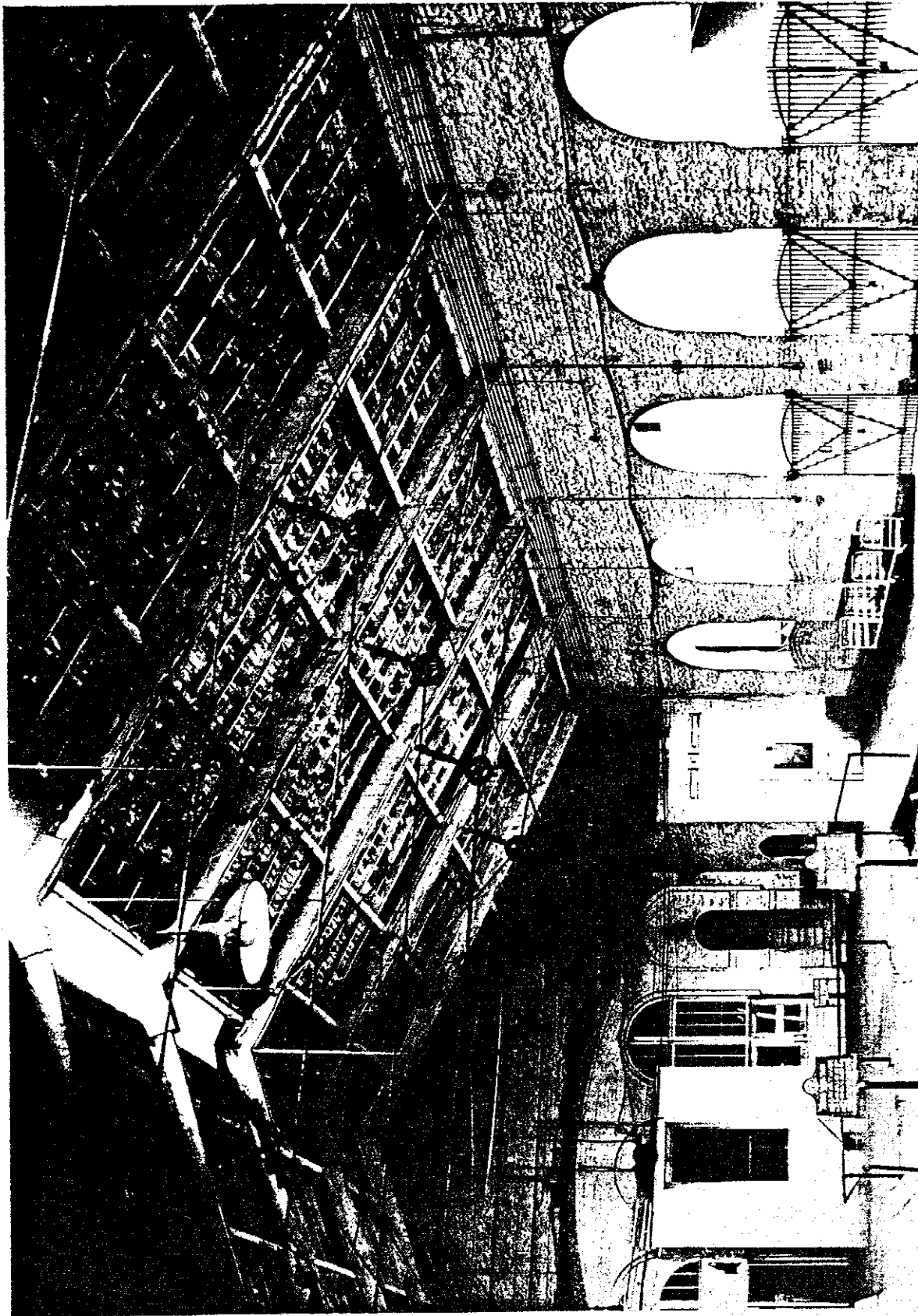


Photo: Louis Schwartz
1962

Central of Georgia Depot, Savannah, Georgia
West Broad Street at Liberty

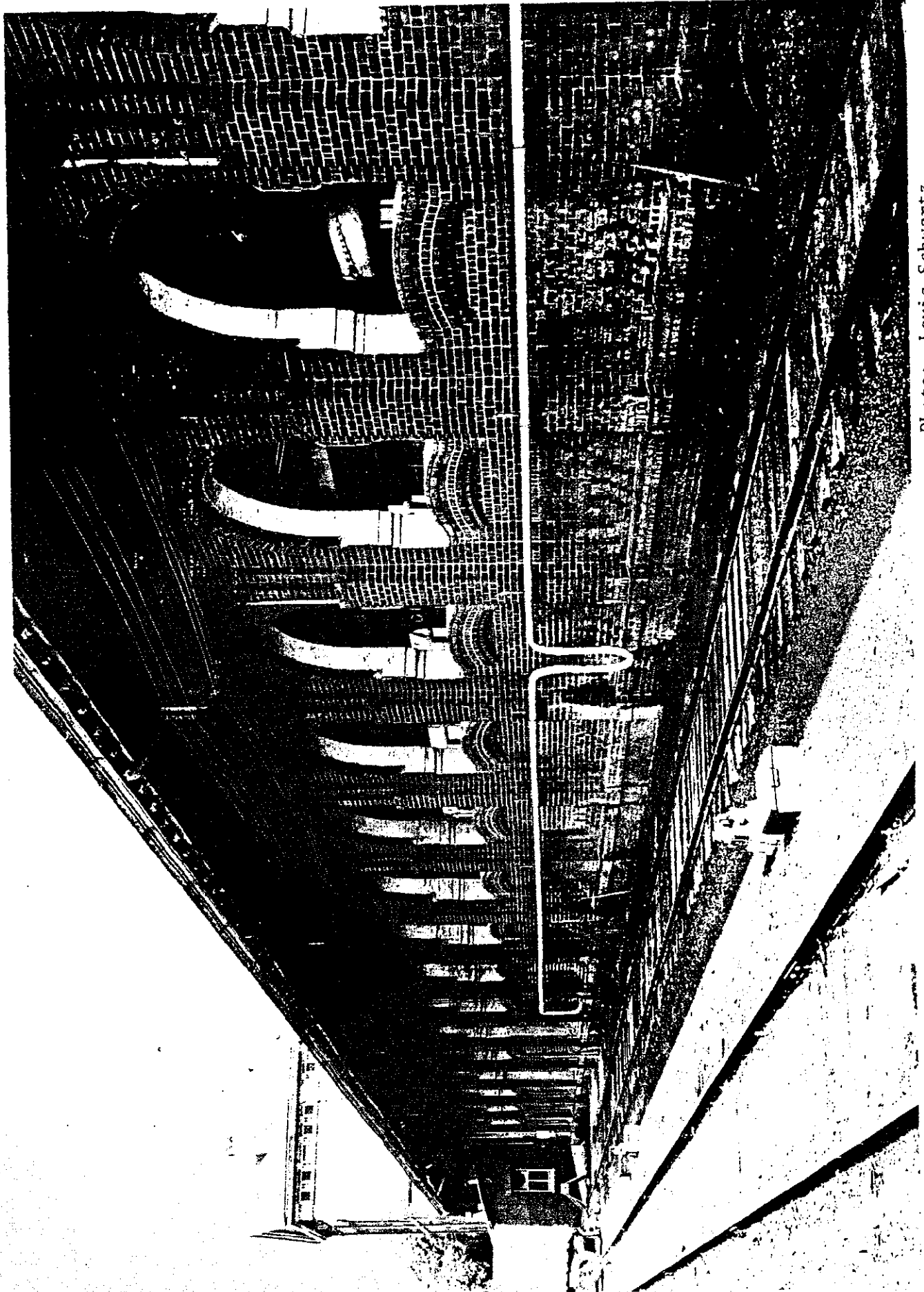
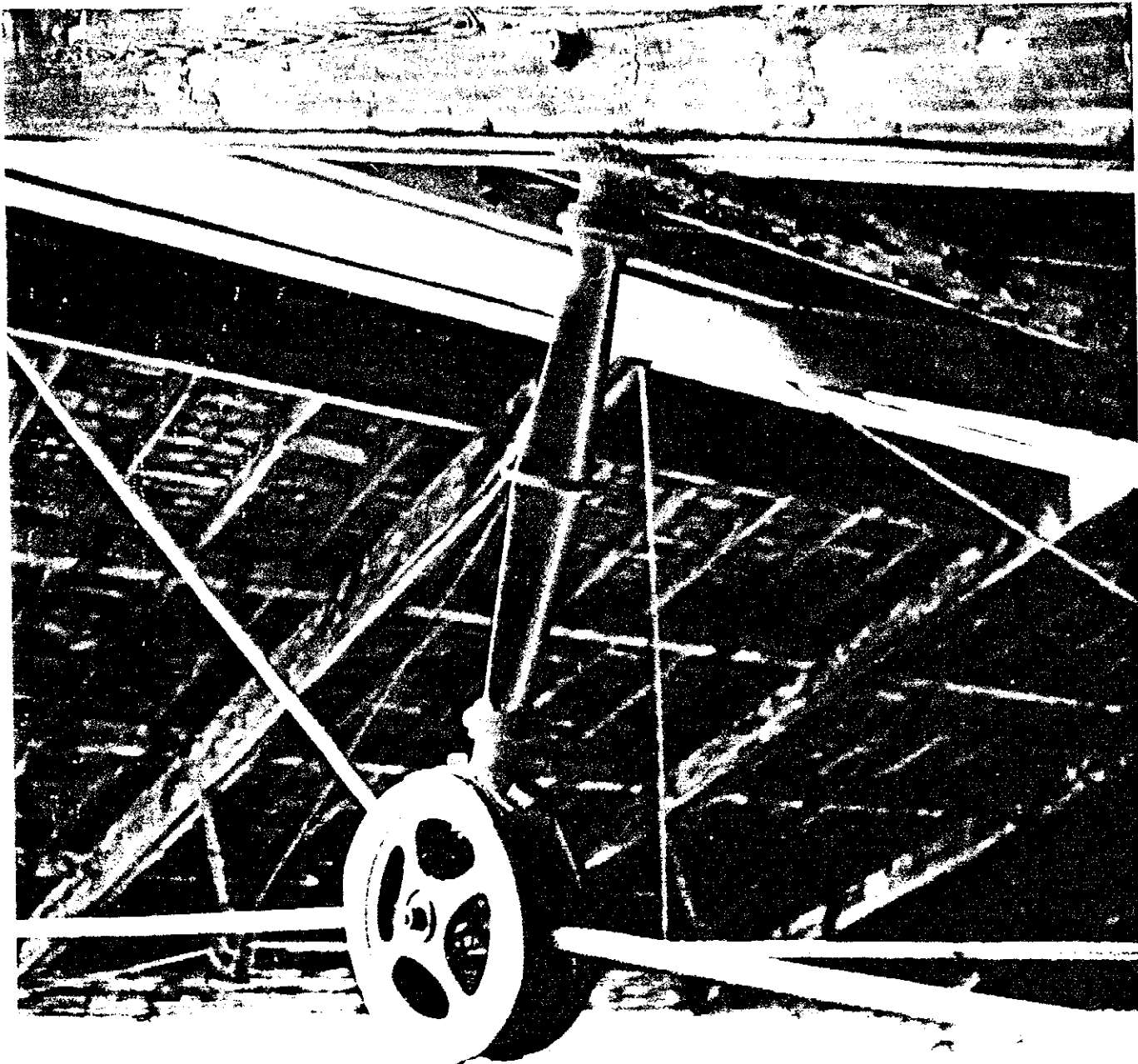


Photo: Louis Schwartz
1962

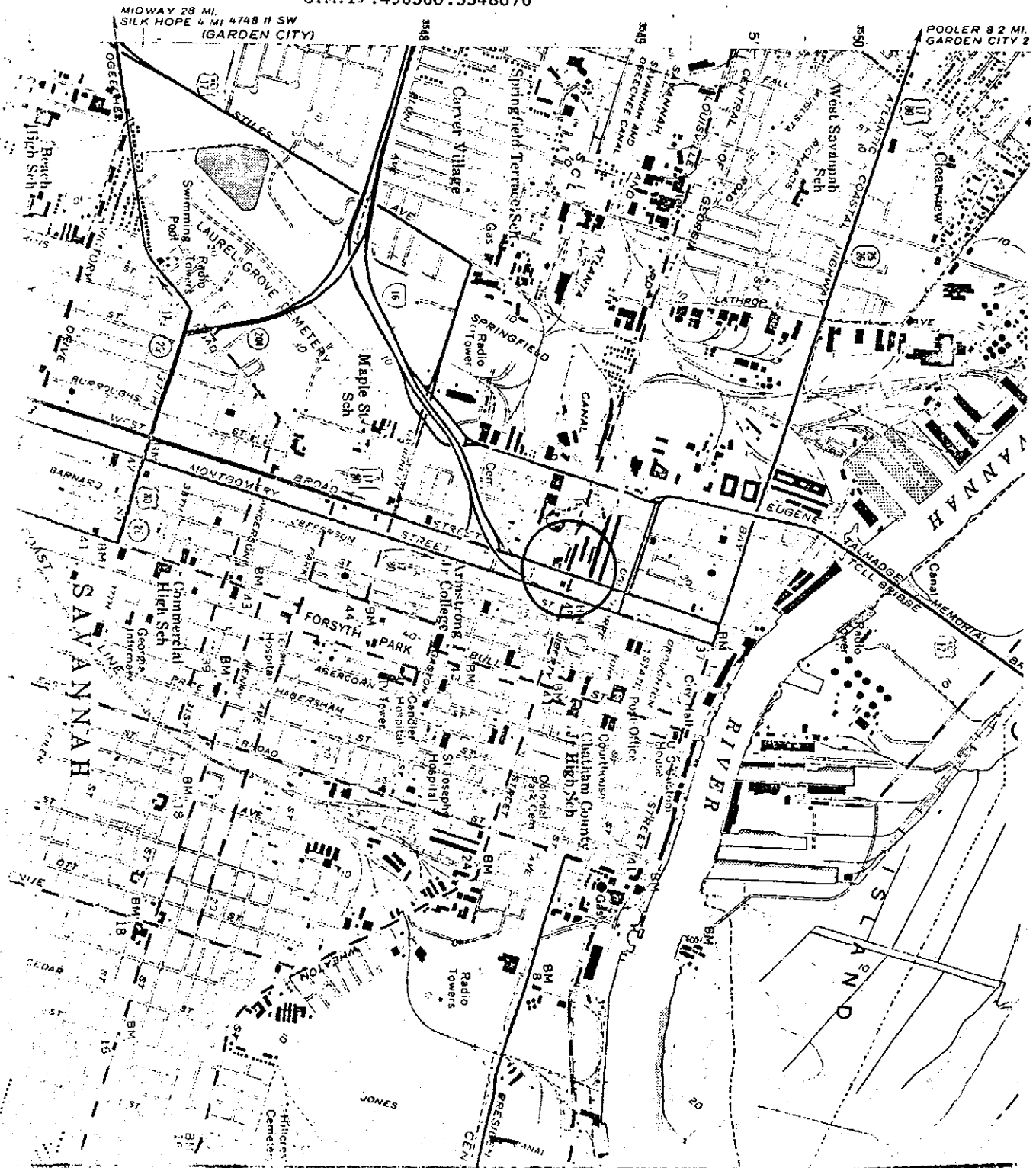
Central of Georgia Depot, Savannah, Georgia
West Broad Street at Liberty



Central of Georgia Depot, Savannah, Georgia
West Broad Street at Liberty

Photo: Eric DeLony
1973

Central of Georgia RR: Savannah Station & Trainshed
 West Broad Street @ Liberty
 Savannah, GA
 USGS 7.5' Savannah, GA-SC Quad
 UTM:17.490580.3548670



9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Meeks, Carroll, The Railroad Station, An Architectural History, (New Haven, 1956).
pp. 107-108.
- Condit, Carl W., American Building Art: 19th Century, New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1960.
- Condit, Carl W., "Trainsheds Preserved in Stations of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad," Railroad History, No. 127 (Oct. 1972) pp. 5-21.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,7	4,9	05,8,0	3,5	4,8	6,7,0	B									
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING										
C							O									

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

A tract of land west of West Broad Street, north of Louisville Road and south of Liberty Street, extending 440 feet west from curbline on West Broad Street in the City of Savannah, County of Chatham and State of Georgia.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Dennis M. Zembala, Historian

ORGANIZATION

Historic American Engineering Record

DATE

August 9, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

National Park Service

TELEPHONE

523-5460

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE

D. C.

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ____

STATE ____

LOCAL ____

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER